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AN ARMENIAN LIST OF HERESIES

THERE are no works in classical Armenian literature devoted entirely to the history of heresy on the pattern of the Greek treatises by Irenaeus, Epiphanius, Theodoret, and others. (Certainly, Eznik's *De Deo* was commonly known as *The Refutation of the Sects*, but its purpose was not to describe all heresies which had ever arisen; it was a theological treatise on the knowledge of God, refuting the three main philosophical trends then of danger to Armenian Christianity.)¹ Although books were frequently written in Armenian against specific heresies, comprehensive works on heresy in general were not composed. But Irenaeus and Epiphanius were translated, and the summary of Epiphanius's *Panarion* was included in various theological compendia.² In such popular collections lists of anathemas and lists of heresies are often found; these lists of heresies were sometimes put into question-and-answer form, like Gregory of Tathev's *Book of Questions*.³ Creeds were also popular in Armenian dogmatic literature. Some of them contain notes in the text after each article, indicating the various perversions of the faith and their heretical authors.⁴

The text translated below is somewhat different from the usual abbreviations of the *Panarion*. Although most of the names can be paralleled in Epiphanius, the substance of the heresies often varies radically. The compiler does not seem to have been very familiar with his subject, as the obscurity of some of his entries and their illogical order show. He also repeated several names, which suggests that he was not copying directly from a standard work on the subject, but rather culling his information from different sources. No specifically Armenian heresies are mentioned, but the last five entries give some idea of the

¹ Cf. L. Mariès, 'Le *De Deo* d'Eznik de Kolb' (Paris, 1924), p. 22 (extrait de la *Revue des études arméniennes*, t. iv, fasc. 1).

² e.g. MS. 29 of the Mechitarist collection in Vienna (J. Dashian, *Catalog der armenischen Handschriften in der K. K. Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, Vienna, 1891). On the summary of the *Panarion* in Armenian, see Dashian, *Literary Studies*, i (National Library 16) (Vienna, 1895), pp. 76-146 (in Armenian).

³ MS. 69 of the Armenian collection at the Bodleian contains a list of heretical doctrines with answers thereto, and also a 'compendious sketch of heresies and schisms' which is different from the text discussed below. Cf. S. Baronian and F. C. Conybeare, *Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1918), p. 160.

⁴ Cf. N. Akinian and R. P. Casey, 'Two Armenian Creeds', *Harvard Theological Review*, xxiv (1931), pp. 143-51. The second creed they publish is also found in the *Seal of Faith* (Etchmiadsin, 1914), pp. 366-9 (on this catena, see below, p. 360, n. 5).

compiler's own theological position: he was primarily concerned with the question of the corruptible or incorruptible nature of the body of Christ. But this is slender evidence for the supposition that the work as a whole had originally any apologetic or polemic purpose. The compiler may well have been indulging in an academic exercise.

The chronology of the entries is erratic, but the last name is also the latest. The Armenians first anathematized Severus of Antioch in 555. In that year a Syrian delegation came to Armenia seeking episcopal consecration for their priest Abdisho; they complained of persecution at the hands of their fellow-Syrians and claimed that the Armenian church had the same faith as they. Their profession of doctrine was found to be orthodox, so Abdisho was consecrated and sent back with a letter from the Catholicos Nerses and Mershapuh bishop of the Mamikonians. The letter contained an exposé of the Armenians' faith and a list of heretics which included Severus with Eutyches, Nestorius, Theodore, and the council of Chalcedon.¹ Since the first council of Dvin in 505 had condemned the *Tome* of Leo and all who had subscribed to it at Chalcedon,² it is not surprising to find the accursed 'Nestorians' mentioned once more. But a completely new factor now entered Armenian theology, for Abdisho and his friends were followers of Julian of Halicarnassus.

The controversy between Julian and Severus on the question of the ἀφθαρσία of the body of Christ did not greatly affect the East until after 518, when Justin I on his accession to the throne abrogated the *Henoticon* and the Greek church returned to the dogmatic position defined at Chalcedon. Many bishops were forced into exile, among them Severus and Julian, and the dispute begun in Constantinople some ten years previously continued in Egypt.³ It became steadily more acute, affecting primarily, but not exclusively, the monophysite church. In Syria the Julianists were in the minority, and from the mid-sixth century on they had frequent recourse to Armenia for episcopal consecration. Abdisho was the first to come with this request, and he managed to persuade the Armenians of the heretical nature of Severus's views. So effective were his arguments that the Armenian church adopted Julian's standpoint

¹ The correspondence surrounding this episode is preserved in the *Book of Letters* (Tiflis, 1901), pp. 52-77. For the anathema on Severus, see p. 56.

² Cf. *Book of Letters*, pp. 41-51. In 505 the Greek church still officially adhered to the *Henoticon*, more favourable to monophysite thought than the decisions of Chalcedon; the *Henoticon* is mentioned in the *Book of Letters* (p. 49) as 'the letter of blessed Zeno the emperor of the Romans'. When Justin restored strict Chalcedonian orthodoxy in 518, the Armenian church beyond the Eastern frontier was not affected. The doctrinal split with Constantinople dates from then rather than 505, but it was not until the reiteration of the Armenians' own position in 555 that the break became irrevocable.

³ Cf. R. Draguet, *Julien d'Halicarnasse* (Louvain, 1924), pp. 8-9.

at the second council of Dvin in 555, and thenceforth their difference on this issue was a constant source of friction between the Syrian and Armenian churches. Later in the sixth century more Syrians went to Armenia for ordination; even when the Julianists themselves split into various factions, they still sought ordination from Armenian bishops.¹

By the eighth century there was growing opposition in Armenia to the ideas of the more extreme followers of Julian. These 'Phantasiasts', who had pushed Julian's views to the extreme of docetism, were attacked by several writers, notably John of Odzun (Catholicos from 717 to 728) and Chosrovik, and at a council summoned by John in 726 at Manazkert the errors of both Julian and Severus were condemned. This council was attended by six Syrian bishops and union between the two churches was effected.² In an endeavour to strengthen the links between the Syrians and Armenians, John agreed with the Syrian Patriarch Athanasius to set up a monastery on the borders of Syria and Armenia where boys might learn both languages and make translations from Syriac into Armenian. But this venture did not last. The latent antagonism between the two monophysite churches was aggravated by wide differences in rites and customs;³ the Syrians continued to charge the Armenians with docetism as followers of Julian, and the two churches drifted apart again.

Before the works of Julian were translated at the council of Manazkert,⁴ there had been many original compositions in Armenian of that tendency, the most noteworthy being the *Seal of Faith*, a catena of great importance for the wealth of Patristic quotations it contains,⁵ and the

¹ Cf. R. Draguet, 'Pièces de polémique antijulianiste: 3, L'ordination frauduleuse des julianistes', *Le Muséon*, liv (1941), pp. 64, 83; E. Ter-Minassiantz, *Die armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zu den syrischen Kirchen* (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 56-57. The term 'Julianist' was not used in Armenia before the eighth century (cf. G. Garitte, *La Narratio de Rebus Armeniae, CSCO Subsidia* 4 (Louvain, 1952), p. 125). The Caucasian Albanians were also influenced by Julianist preaching (cf. A. Vardanian, 'Des Johannes von Jerusalem Brief an den albanischen Katholikos Abas', *Oriens Christianus*, N.F. ii (1912), pp. 64-77).

² Cf. Ter-Minassiantz, *op.cit.*, pp. 71-91.

³ Cf. 'Dionysius Barsalibi against the Armenians' (*Woodbrooke Studies IV*), ed. by A. Mingana (Cambridge, 1931), p. 55.

⁴ Cf. the letter of Photius, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Pravoslavnyi palestinskii sbornik*, xi (1892), p. 180. But on this correspondence between Photius and the Armenians, see Garitte, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-5.

⁵ Ed. K. Ter-Mekerttchian (Etchmiadsin, 1914). The Patristic quotations have been described by J. Lebon, 'Les citations patristiques grecques du Sceau de la Foi', *Rev. hist. eccl.* xxv (1929), pp. 5-32. This catena dates probably from the mid-seventh century, cf. H. Jordan, 'Armenische Irenaeus-Fragmente' (*Texte u. Unt.*, 36. Band, Heft 3, Leipzig, 1913), pp. 117-20. Jordan also discusses the *Radix fidei* from the Paris MS Arm. 153, *ibid.*, pp. 160-3.

letter of Sahak III against the dyophysites.¹ John of Odzun was quite unable to eradicate the teaching of the Julianists, and, although they frequently disclaimed the title, Armenian theologians continued to echo their ideas. The council of Shirakavan (862) endorsed the principle of incorruptibility as applied to the body of Christ,² the letter of Khatchik (Catholicos 972-91) to the Metropolitan of Sebaste was largely concerned with the same issue,³ while in later Cilician Armenia the noted Catholicos Nerses Shnorhali reflected in his writings the continued influence of Julianist theology.⁴

This list of heresies is found in the Armenian manuscript no. 153 of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The manuscript is a collection of historical and theological writings, of which the most important is the catena entitled *Radix Fidei*.⁵ Our text occupies folios 136^v-144^v and is described in Macler's catalogue as 'On the heresies of the first three centuries'.⁶ This, however, is not the title in the Armenian; both the index and the heading of the piece itself read: 'Concerning the Number of Heretics in the World', and the subject-matter ranges from the heathen before Christ to Severus in the sixth century A.D. The manuscript was written in 1704 at Constantinople, but our document is much earlier as its text has suffered from several recopyings; lacunae are frequent and the grammar is very corrupt. The date of its original composition is unknown, but the reference to the Arabs (աւճիկը) suggests some time after the seventh century.⁷

*Concerning the Number of Heretics in the World*⁸

The first heretics were the heathens who <denied> the creator of heaven and earth, and in his stead deified <creation>. And the many deities went astray from the true God.⁹

¹ *Book of Letters*, pp. 413-82. Cf. Ter-Minassiantz, *op.cit.*, pp. 136-141.

² Canons in A. Balgy, *Historia Doctrinae Catholicae inter Armenos* (Vienna, 1878), pp. 217-19; in the Armenian version of the book, pp. 202-3.

³ Quoted by Stephen of Taron. The Armenian text was inaccessible to me. Cf. the translation by F. Macler (Paris, 1917), esp. pp. 99-102 and 112.

⁴ Cf. P. Tekeyan, *Controverses christologiques en Arméno-Cilicie (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 124, Rome, 1939), pp. 101-15.*

⁵ Cf. p. 360, n. 5. There is another manuscript with this catena in the Vatican, Codex Arm. 31 (cf. E. Tisserant, *Codices Armeni Bibliothecae Vaticanae* (Rome, 1927), codex 31, fols. 107-47).

⁶ F. Macler, *Catalogue des manuscrits arméniens et géorgiens* (Paris, 1908), p. 84.

⁷ Arab raids on Armenia began in 640.

⁸ I am grateful to the authorities of the Bibliothèque Nationale for a microfilm of the manuscript.

⁹ The first volume of Epiphanius's *Panarion* (heresies 1-20) deals with the Greeks, Samaritans, and Jews.

After these were the Sadducees from among the Jews; they admitted neither soul, nor angel, nor resurrection of the dead.¹

After these was Simon the magician, who said of himself that he was the Paraclete who had been sent from the Father; and he said that God was not omnipotent, nor eternal; and he says that each people has its own god.²

After him was Marcion who said there were thirty gods.

Like him Valentinus says there were ninety³ gods, and he says that the thirtieth god wished to see the first god, and was not able to see him, and began to weep; and as he wept he begat Satan, and Satan begat others up to eight gods; and those born from Satan created the world.⁴

But Marcion says there are three oppositions and six different natures of the one nature and one essence of the holy Trinity.⁵

Cerinthus and Carpocrates and Cerdon and Menander:⁶ these said that it was said by the Laws and Prophets that he is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because they say he is known on account of the Incarnation; but he who is incorporeal is unknowable.

The Manichees said there are two gods; the one they call the good creator, and Christ the son of the good creator, and the other they call the creator of evil; and they say that the evil-working god had a fourth part in the created things, but not the whole.⁷

Again the Manichees who say Christ appeared as a phantom in the world, and that all the signs of his coming in the flesh are phantasies.

But another Valentinus, like the Manichees, says that there are two creators, one good, the other evil; and he says that the old law of Moses was the work of the evil creator, and in it, he says, is written: 'an eye for an eye' and 'in return for blood, the blood of the murderer will be shed', and that Christ and his Father, whom they called the benevolent God, established the testament, and Christ said: 'Come to me all who are burdened with sins and I shall give you rest.'

His disciples made an addition to this heresy and said there are thirty ages (aeons) and that the ages were each created by one god.⁸

¹ This paragraph does not follow Epiphanius, but Acts xxiii. 8.

² Cf. *Panarion*, heresy no. 21. But Epiphanius has *μεγάλην δύναμιν τοῦ Θεοῦ* for 'Paraclete'.

³ Is this a scribal error for 'thirty'?

⁴ Valentinus asserted that there were thirty aeons, but a primitive ogdoad. Cf. *Panarion* 31.

⁵ According to Epiphanius (*Panarion* 42), Marcion said that there were three principles.

⁶ For Cerinthus, cf. *ibid.* 28; Carpocrates, *ibid.* 27; Cerdon, *ibid.* 41; Menander, *ibid.* 22.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.* 66.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.* 31.

Olbeos and Satanios:¹ they said the world (was created) by angels and not by God.

Basilides said that creation (consisted of) 367 heavens; he, being a disciple of Simon the magician, also said that the days of the year corresponded to the number of the heavens.²

Apollinas³ (said that) there is one God above all, the beginning of everything; and he says that another god created him, and having been created evil, he invented also in his wickedness this world.

Cerinthus and Basilides and Zephonos:⁴ these say that Christ and Jesus Christ are different; they say that Jesus came down from heaven and was born of Mary and Joseph like all men, and they say that Christ came from above and dwelt in Jesus.

A certain Homer⁵ says that Christ is created; and he says that he was created by himself and not like other creatures by God. And he said that he was not the Son of God by nature, but in name only. And this he said lest the sufferings of the cross be imputed to the Father.

Sabellius the Libyan⁶ denies the three persons of the holy Trinity and confesses one Person, the Father and the Son and the Spirit being names in the Person of the Father⁷—just as a man who has three names is yet one person. Thus he said that the Father only was God in Person and has three names.

A certain Beryllius:⁸ he said of the Son that he is not God begotten of God, but that the divinity of the Father dwelt in him, and he is not God in person and essence.

Eunomius⁹ and Arius:¹⁰ these said that the Son of God was a creature, and after a time came into being, and was not begotten from the Father's nature, but the honour of sonship was given to him, (and God) made him his co-worker in creation; and as the Son was created by the Father, so, he said, was the Spirit by the Son; and as the Son took honour from the Father by virtue of his co-operation in creation, so also they attribute to him a rank of greatness and humility—they say the Father is greater than the Son, but the Son, they say, is greater than the Spirit. This he said in Alexandria.

¹ Rather Satornilus, who said that seven angels created the world; cf. *Panarion* 23. But who is Olbeos (Ոլբէոս)—Oblias?

² Cf. *ibid.* 24.

³ Apelles, not Apollinarius. Cf. *ibid.* 44.

⁴ Zephonos (Շեփոնոս) has eluded my efforts at identification.

⁵ Who was Homer (Հոմէրոս)?

⁶ Cf. *ibid.* 62.

⁷ Or possibly: 'and confesses that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one Person (but different) names in the Person of the Father.'

⁸ Beryllus of Bostra is not mentioned by Epiphanius, but cf. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vi. 33.

⁹ Eunomius was the leader of the Anomoeans, pupil of Aëtius. Cf. *Panarion* 76.

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.* 69.

And after Arius of Alexandria, was Macedonius¹ who denied the Spirit. He confessed that the Son is equal and consubstantial with the Father in all respects, but he said the Spirit was created and a creature, and not consubstantial with the Father and the Son.

A certain Eutyches and another Valentinus, like each other, said that Christ received his flesh from heaven and not from the Virgin. Also another Eutyches,² a cursed and pernicious man, said as follows, that just as when smiths melt silver and gold which they put in a carved mould, the gold and silver only take form and shape from the model of the mould when they are put in it, but cannot take to themselves the essence and material of the model; so also the divine Word did not take from the nature of the Virgin, but appeared in form only, in the shape and image, stature and form of a man; and the Word was incarnate from God himself, having no connexion with the Virgin.

Paul of Samosata:³ he does not admit that God the Word was with the Father before the ages, but he said that his beginning was from Mary; and he says that by grace he was made worthy to become the Son. And his disciple Theodore said that Christ was a mortal man of God, and died corruptible on the cross and God the Word raised him up.

Nestorius of Antioch,⁴ the disciple of Diodorus, said that he who was born from the Virgin was a mere man. He said as follows: it was not fitting that God should enter the belly of a woman and be carried for months in the womb of a virgin; and for this reason he claims that the Virgin was the mother of a man, but not the mother of God; and subsequently, he says, the Word dwelt in the flesh and was made worthy of the grace of Sonship at the baptism, by the voice of the Father: 'This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.' And he says that in name only the Virgin is the mother of God, but not by nature, for not by nature does he say she bore the divine Word, but the temple of the Word.

Apollinarius of Laodicea says that God the Word took only flesh from our nature, without soul or mind, being content to have divinity alone in his body without soul or mind.⁵

A certain Novatian of Rome:⁶ he did not accept the penitence of those

¹ Macedonius is not mentioned in the *Panarion*. He is often linked with the Anomoeans and Eunomius; the third book of the (pseudo-)Athanasian *De Trinitate* is directed against Macedonius, the first two against the Anomoeans.

² Cf. Theodoret, *Compendium* iv. 13.

³ Cf. *Panarion* 65.

⁴ Nestorius is also discussed by Theodoret, *op. cit.* iv. 12.

⁵ Apollinarius is not mentioned by name in the *Panarion*, but his ideas are discussed in ch. 77, *contra Dimoeritas*.

⁶ Cf. *Panarion* 59.

who had sinned after the font of baptism; he says that after one baptism there is no second baptism; similarly confession and penitence cannot take place twice.

But a certain Montanus by name says:¹ 'I am the holy Spirit who have been sent from the Father.'

A certain Severianus² does not accept the old writings of the prophets.

A certain Cinsianus alters the old and new writings according to his tastes.³

A certain Eulogius did not accept the gospel of John.⁴

And certain Ebionites⁵ do not accept the letter of the holy apostle Paul, but call it a perverted and erroneous law; and they honour water as god, and are constantly baptized in the summer and winter like Jews and Arabs. And they say no one receives eternal life unless he is baptized constantly.

Similarly the Marcionites⁶ as often as they sin are re-baptized; and if any unbaptized person die, they baptize another person from among the living in the name of the dead man. And their women perform baptism.

But there are some who are called Adamites;⁷ they say that Adam is still alive, and in their order of service they have put something foreign to the whole apostolic church, for men and women at the time of their prayers strip off their clothes and thus complete their prayers and their readings, saying that Adam and Eve were created naked by God, and being thus in the Garden were not ashamed; they are similarly naked in their mother's womb and are born so. So they consider the church as the type of the Garden and the mother's womb. And at the time of prayer all must be naked in the church, which is completely Satanic and displeasing to God.

Bishop Origen⁸ says that as men do not see the angels, so the angels do not see the holy Spirit, and similarly the Spirit does not see the Son, just as the Son is not able to see the Father. And he said the Garden was not on earth but in heaven. This Origen was a victorious Patriarch among the Greeks and interpreter of the Old and New Testaments. He was deceived by the emperor Julian and worshipped idols, and after that the twelve tribes did not receive him. He despised the testimony of the Old and New Testaments, and altered what was in them concerning Christ; and he spoke barking words and composed unorthodox writings.

And there were certain others whose names are these: Hymenos,

¹ Cf. *Panarion* 48.

² Cf. *ibid.* 45.

³ Perhaps the Cainites are intended; for their heretical writings, cf. *ibid.* 38.

⁴ This Eulogius is mentioned neither by Epiphanius nor Theodoret.

⁵ Cf. *Panarion* 30. ⁶ Cf. *ibid.* 42. ⁷ Cf. *ibid.* 52. ⁸ Cf. *ibid.* 64.

Philip, Simon, Cibeos, Carpocrates, Menander, Gaianus, Marcion, Cerdon, Severianus and Phanes, Theodotus: all these did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, but said the soul only has incorruptible life.

A certain Menander said:¹ 'I am the saviour who have been sent from above; and those who believe in me and are baptized in my name have eternal life in this world, and abide without growing old or dying.' And he did not admit the resurrection of the dead.

But a certain Cerinthus says:² 'I am the one expected by the angels, who after the resurrection of the dead will have sovereignty over the earth.' And he said that they will work the desires of the flesh in Jerusalem once more, and after 1000 years Jerusalem will be a house of marriage—that is, after being dead 1000 years, he will rise and fulfil the desire of the flesh in Jerusalem.

Maximian³ considered the body of our Lord Jesus Christ corruptible in all respects by nature and susceptible of pain, and changeable and alterable.

Photinus and Melitianus⁴ say that the divinity of the Son is passible by nature.

But a certain Basilides⁵ said that Christ descended and dwelt in Jesus, and he said Jesus was passible and died, while Christ was impassible and remained immortal.

John, bishop of the Egyptians, and Damian of Antioch and Ibas of Edessa and Leo of Rome and Theodoret, bishop of the city of Cyr:⁶ these were disciples of Nestorius and said like him that the Word did not take flesh from the womb of the Virgin, but was created a mere man from the womb of the Virgin by the holy Spirit. Afterwards God the Word dwelt in him, being of two natures unconfused; and they say that Christ is Son by grace and not God by nature. They say that until the baptism he was a mere man, and being worthy at the baptism he was called the Son of God.

Severus⁷, being one of these, anathematizes those who say 'of two natures', and he says 'one nature of the Word and the flesh after the inexpressible union'—this he said rightly. But by another statement he corrupted the truth by saying that the Word was receptive of affections and subject to corporeal passions, and he said that the body of the Lord

¹ Cf. *Panarion* 22.

² Is this the same Cerinthus as the one mentioned above?

³ Is this the Arian Maximin?

⁴ Is this the Arian Meletius (*ibid.* 68)?

⁵ Cf. *ibid.* 24.

⁶ Those who supported the council of Chalcedon were always considered, with the Antiochenes, as 'Nestorians' by Monophysites. There are some curious juxtapositions in the frequent lists of such heretics in the *Book of Letters*.

⁷ Severus was first anathematized by the Armenians in 555; cf. above, p. 359.

was corruptible until the crucifixion and the resurrection, but after the resurrection it was glorified and perfected, and passions and affections and corruption were taken away from it. And many other blasphemies he uttered.

From such evil heresies may Christ our God deliver us, and may he establish us in orthodoxy. And to thee be glory for ever, Amen.

R. W. THOMSON